

Non-Escalation, De-Escalation, and Crisis Management

High Level Program Overview

VISTELARBuilding **Safe** and Respectful **Workplaces****1**

The Core Principle

Treat people with dignity by showing respect, even if you disagree and regardless of the circumstances.

2

Be Alert & Decisive

Method of being aware of your surroundings and ready to take appropriate action if needed or required.

3

Respond, Don't React

Method to minimize the chance that your behavior will escalate a situation.

4

Showtime Mindset

Method to become emotionally, mentally, and physically prepared to respond appropriately to any situation.

5

Proxemics 10-5-2

Method to enhance your personal safety, display respect, and not cause discomfort in the other person.

6

Universal Greeting

Method for initiating contact that fosters collaboration and minimizes the chance of escalation.

7

Beyond Active Listening

Method of advanced listening to gather information, enable perspective-taking, show respect, and demonstrate concern.

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Persuasion

Method to achieve cooperation—while de-escalating the situation, avoiding escalation, and if necessary, confirming non-compliance.

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Redirection

Method to de-escalate verbal resistance and get back to the issue at hand.

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Crisis Management

Method to stay safe and promote recovery when interacting with individuals having cognitive challenges and exhibiting at-risk behaviors.

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Appropriate Action

Method of identifying what to do when verbal conflict management methods don't work, or a clearly articulable safety violation exists.

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Closure

Method for ending interactions safely and on a positive note.

1 The Core Principle

Treat people with dignity by showing respect, even if you disagree and regardless of the circumstances.



Key Point: There are five approaches to showing respect:

- See the world through their eyes
- Listen with all your senses
- Ask and explain why
- Offer options, and let them choose
- Give the opportunity to reconsider

Maxim: Showing respect drives safety and better outcomes.

Let us start with the core principle of conflict management that serves as the foundation for everything we teach.

The three steps for practicing *Empathy*, the foundation for treating people with dignity by showing respect, are as follows:

1. Gather information—accurately identify your own and their thoughts and feelings
2. Take their perspective—imaginatively put yourself in their place; apply the *Empathy Triad*:
 - Acknowledge their perspective
 - Seek to understand
 - Anticipate their needs
3. Take action to show respect and demonstrate concern

Method of being aware of your surroundings and ready to take appropriate action if needed or required.



Key Point: Have a pre-planned, practiced response to situations where conflict could occur.

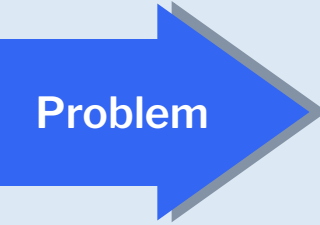
1. Constantly scan your environment with all of your senses
2. Do not ignore behaviors that give you feelings of uneasiness
3. Practice *When-Then Thinking* (action forecasting and rehearsal thinking- when that happens, I will do this)
4. Don't allow *Gateway Behaviors* (disrespectful actions, veiled and overt threats that lead to physical violence)
5. Watch out for *Threat Indicators* (signals that communication may have broken down and your safety may be compromised)
 - Proxemics—distance, positioning, and movement
 - Non-verbals—how they look
 - Verbals—words they choose
 - Para-verbals—how they sound (such as tone)

Maxim: Remain alert, be decisive, and have a preplanned, practiced response in mind

Be Alert is what to look for, and being Decisive is knowing what to do.

3 Respond, Don't React

Method to minimize the chance that your behavior will escalate a situation.



Problem

Conflict, Crisis, or Combat incidents occurring that could have been prevented.

Key Point: You must be aware of your personal hot buttons (*Conflict Triggers*) and then take proactive steps to maintain your *Emotional Equilibrium* in the face of them.

Maxim: The untrained person reacts—the trained person responds.

When interacting with others, do not speak or act on the first impulse or emotion. This could lead to saying something you will regret later. Instead, thoughtfully and professionally respond to the situation. Use professional language towards a professional goal.

Proxemics, non-verbals, verbals, and paraverbals.

Conflict Triggers (yours and theirs)

Maintain your *Emotional Equilibrium* by building *Trigger Guards*, practicing empathy, and being mindful of who you represent (yourself, your family, and your employer, for example).

The first step in building a Trigger Guard is to identify the Conflict Trigger and the emotion you are feeling. Once you've identified it, you can ask yourself the purpose (or cause) of the emotion you are feeling so that you can define it, name it, and own it.

Conflict Triggers can be universal, such as eye-rolling, finger-pointing, or being told to “calm down.” Other *Conflict Triggers* are personal, such as insults or humiliation, condescension, sighing, or aggressive posturing.

Method to become emotionally, mentally, and physically prepared to respond appropriately to any situation.

Problem

Situations escalating to *Conflict, Crisis, or Combat* as a result of impulsive reactions to the other person's actions.



Key Point: You must prepare in advance of any interaction to give the best professional representation of yourself.

Maxim: Imagine yourself stepping onto a stage to give a performance.

In advance of any interaction where you anticipate or are faced with conflict, establish a *Showtime Mindset* to guard against a negative mindset affecting the outcome of a situation.

Here are the specific steps to establish a *Showtime Mindset*:

1. Say to yourself, "*It's Showtime!*"
2. "Stack your blocks."—adopt a confident posture with shoulders over hips, hips over knees
3. Breathe deeply—in through your nose, pause, and slowly breathe out through your mouth
4. Put on the appropriate facial expression for the situation
5. Use positive self-talk (e.g., "I've got this."—"People are safer because I'm here now.")
6. Step onto the "stage"

Method of using distance, positioning, movement, and hand placement to enhance your personal safety, display respect, and not cause discomfort in the other person.

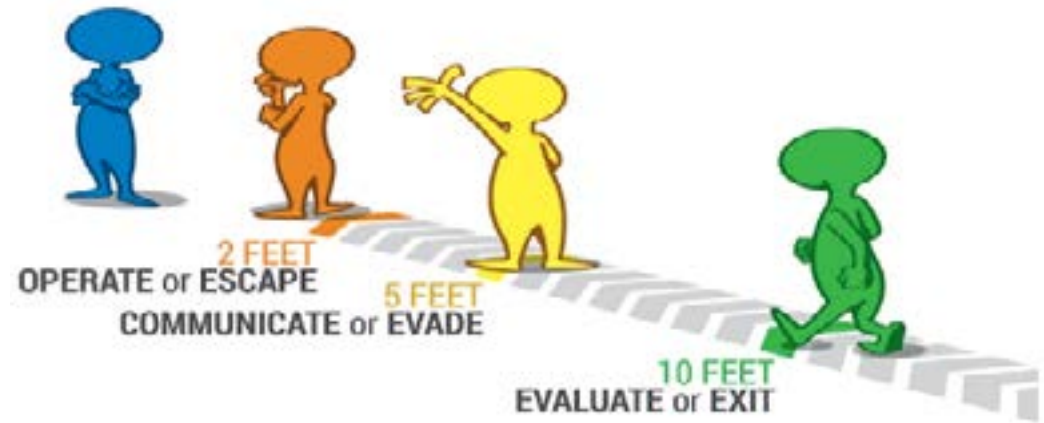
Problem

Lack of attention to your proxemics increasing risk of physical injury or setting off other's *Conflict Triggers*.

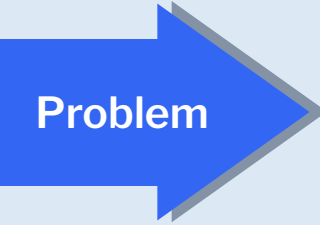
Key Point: Assess risk and threats at a distance before moving closer; maintain a prepared stance; keep hand placement above the waist with open palms.

Maxim: The best self-defense is preventing or avoiding the attack.

Proxemics is the study of the human use of space. Space equals time, and time equals options.



Method for initiating contact that fosters collaboration and minimizes the chance of escalation.



Problem

Point of engagement starting off on the wrong foot and escalating unnecessarily.

Key Point: Your initial greeting must answer the questions: Who are you? Where do you get your authority? What do you want? What's in it for me?—and then encourage the other person to talk so you can listen.

Maxim: Begin with the goal of correcting any false assumptions.

If you do not immediately answer these questions, the other person will often:

- feel inhibited from communicating with you
- fill in the blanks with incorrect answers, such as misidentification as to who you are; assumption you believe they are doing something wrong; or expectation the interaction is going to take a long time
- feel disrespected

Any of these outcomes could cause an interaction to start on a negative note or even escalate. The *Universal Greeting* prevents these outcomes.

To use the *Universal Greeting*:

- Use an appropriate greeting (such as “Hello” or “Good evening”)
- State your name and affiliation (state your name and who you work for)
- State the reason for the contact (explain why you are talking with them)
- Ask the relevant question (why you are speaking with them)

Example: “Good morning. I’m Taylor Jones with security. The reason I approached you is because you are in a restricted area. May I help you find someone?”

7 Beyond Active Listening

Method of advanced listening to gather information, enable perspective-taking, show respect, and demonstrate concern.

Problem

People feeling disrespected during an interaction because they don't feel they are being listened to.

Key Point: When faced with conflict, just listening is almost always the best response.

Maxim: Listening is paying attention to what is being said, not thinking about what to say next.

To go *Beyond Active Listening*, dig deeper by:

1. Clarifying—use open ended or opinion seeking questions
2. Paraphrasing—repeat back, in your own words, what you believe the other person meant by what they said
3. Reflecting—describe back to them the feeling you think they are experiencing and from your point of view why they are feeling that way
4. Affirming—make a statement that acknowledges what they said/ their point of view
5. Mirroring—subtly adopt the other person's positive body language and casually repeat a word or two the other person used
6. Advocating—acknowledge the issue and that you should work together to resolve it
7. Summarizing—at the end of an interaction provide a summary of what was discussed

The primary goals of *Beyond Active Listening* are:

- for the other person to feel they have been heard and understood
- for the other person to feel you are interested in what they are trying to communicate
- to keep the other person talking so you can gather information about their needs, wants, and desires, which will help you in managing whatever conflict that might arise

Method to achieve cooperation—while de-escalating the situation, avoiding escalation, and if necessary, confirming non-compliance.

Problem

Questioning, refusal



Key Point: Persuasion works best when you are respectful, provide solid reasoning, and appeal to their emotions.

Maxim: Cooperation is more likely with the use of respect, logic, and emotion.

Persuasion is used to gain cooperation. Persuasion works best when you:

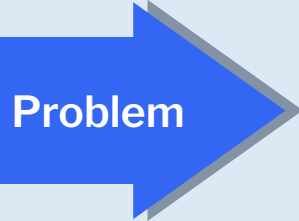
1. Are respectful
2. Provide solid reasoning
3. Appeal to their emotions

Being respectful is accomplished by applying all of the non-escalation methods and starting every interaction with a *Universal Greeting*. People are more likely to agree or cooperate with people they like, trust, and view as credible.

The *Persuasion Sequence* provides an opportunity to appeal to their logic and emotions:

1. Explain Why, Confirm Understanding
2. Offer Options, Let Them Choose—start by offering them a positive option and empowering them to decide
3. Give Opportunity To Reconsider—give a chance for them to save face while providing a reminder of the reason why cooperation is the best course of action.

Method to de-escalate verbal resistance and get back to the issue at hand.



Problem

Verbal confrontation with anger, shouting, or ranting.

Key Point: The goal is to redirect brain function from the amygdala (responsible for emotion processing and survival instincts) to the prefrontal cortex (responsible for higher reasoning and social control).

Maxim: Resistance dissipates when respect is shown and the other person is required to think instead of reacting emotionally.

Redirections are used to de-escalate and redirect resistance, such as a verbal confrontation involving anger, shouting, or ranting. The goal is to get them to start thinking rationally by stopping them from reacting emotionally. Instead of speaking on your first impulse or by trying to “fix their attitude,” focus on getting past the confrontation and back to your intended outcome goal. Try one or more of the following Redirection methods:

- Slow Things Down e.g., “Please speak more slowly. I’d like to help.”
- Acknowledge > Back To Issue
- Divert Attention
- “I” Statements

Acknowledge > Back To Issue example:

“That’s very frustrating, however, the good news is that I can help you with this problem.”

Divert Attention example:

“I apologize for interrupting, but I need to check this text message.”

I Statement example:

“I am unhappy with this situation.” (versus—“You are making me angry.”)

10 Crisis Management

Problem

Inability to cope with a situation due to internal or external factors, such as:

- neurocognitive disorders
- mental health disorders
- being under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- acute stress
- having a history of psychological, emotional or physical trauma

Method to stay safe and promote recovery when interacting with individuals having cognitive challenges and exhibiting at-risk behaviors.

Key Point: People experience crisis due to a real or perceived threat, over-stimulation, or an unmet need, not because of their diagnosis.

Maxim: All behavior equalizes—people will either match yours or you will match theirs.

As a review, here are the five Crisis Management methods taught in the *Non-Escalation, De-Escalation, and Crisis Management* training program.

- 1. Model Calmness—demonstrate the behavior you want them to match**
Speak softly if they are shouting (reverse yelling); purposely under-react to tantrum behaviors (extinction); kneel, squat, or sit at their level and/or remove distracting or potentially frightening clothing and objects, such as sunglasses, lab coat, police badge, traffic vest, hat, or surgical mask (lower profile). Use a “one voice” approach (only one staff member should talk to the person).
- 2. Reduce Stimulation—less of everything**
Don’t crowd the person in crisis. Step back, stand off-center (instead of facing directly), move slowly, and keep your hands in sight. Soften your tone and lower the volume of your voice. Turn down televisions and radios, turn off alarms and sirens, and soften/lower lights unless it compromises safety.
- 3. Separate and Support—remove them from the scene or remove the scene from them**
Provide for their privacy as much as possible: take them out of public view; but, if that’s not possible, dismiss onlookers and block their view. Keep other staff on scene for safety, but out of view from the person in crisis. Solicit help from mental health professionals, interpreters, family members, and facility staff known by the person.
- 4. Adapt Communication—economy of speech**
Slow things down. Wear the appropriate expression. Ask only one question or give only one direction at a time. Use five or fewer words per sentence, pause frequently and wait for them to respond. Use their name frequently so they know you are addressing them directly. And make a safety statement like, “You are safe with me” and “I will protect you.”
Note: never say things like “I’m not going to hurt you”, because many people in crisis are likely to only hear the word “hurt.” Also, because many victims have been told by their attackers that they won’t hurt them, before or during the assault.
- 5. Meet Unmet Needs—no one will de-escalate until their needs are addressed**
When appropriate, offer water, food, toileting, privacy, a blanket, a place to lie down or sit, a phone call, transportation, medical attention etc. When advocating for the needs of others you present yourself as an ally to them rather than an enforcer.

11 Appropriate Action

Method of identifying what to do when verbal conflict management methods don't work, or a clearly articulable safety violation exists.

Problem

Attempts at resolution and/or de-escalation fail; an immediate, clearly articulable safety violation occurs

Key Point: Must know your options for taking action and have a pre-planned, practiced response for situations you will likely face.

Maxim: Get safe, get help, follow-through, and be consistent.

Despite best efforts:

- Attempts at resolution or de-escalation may fail or be inappropriate,
- An immediate, clearly articulable safety violation or concern may occur.

In either case, you must take *Appropriate Action*, which requires that you know your options for taking action, and have a pre-planned, practiced response for situations you will likely face (*When/Then Thinking*—when this happens, I will do this). This means you must understand when *Appropriate Action* should be taken, and what *Appropriate Action* options are available to you.

Options for taking *Appropriate Action* will vary according to company policies, roles and responsibilities, policies and procedures, level of training, past practices, defined rules of engagement, security plan, the environments, and the availability of security, police, or other help. Keep in mind that the right to take necessary and reasonable action to defend oneself or protect others is inalienable.

Problem

The interaction ends with an undesired outcome despite your best efforts of non-escalation, de-escalation, and crisis management.

Key Point: Conclude all interactions with behaviors that establish a positive foundation for any future interactions; reflect on interactions with the goal of improving future performance.

Maxim: End with the goal of the best possible outcome.

Closure Steps:

- Exhaust all reasonable attempts to resolve disagreements, de-escalate resistance, and manage crisis—and then ensure everyone is safe.
- If necessary, take *Appropriate Action* and check their:
 - Emotional status
 - Level of responsiveness—e.g., “What time of day is it.”
 - Physical injuries (if any)—e.g., bleeding, bruising, broken bones, trouble breathing
- Conclude the interaction using a *Closure* statement, with these attributes:
 - Includes something you’ve learned about them by listening with all your senses
 - Does not use sarcasm and is not a catchphrase, such as “Have a nice day,” “Just doing my job,” “No problem”
 - Expresses hope for a better next encounter, if the situation has gone badly
 - Includes the Summarize element of Beyond Active Listening, where you review what was decided and ask for confirmation
- Reflect on the interaction—either on your own or with others—with the goals of identifying lessons learned and improving future performance.
- Take care of yourself. If your response to an interaction is negatively impacting you emotionally or relationally, (e.g., compassion fatigue, depression, anxiety), seek out a trusted coworker, friend, supervisor, or counselor. Check with your workplace for employee assistance programs or resilience training.

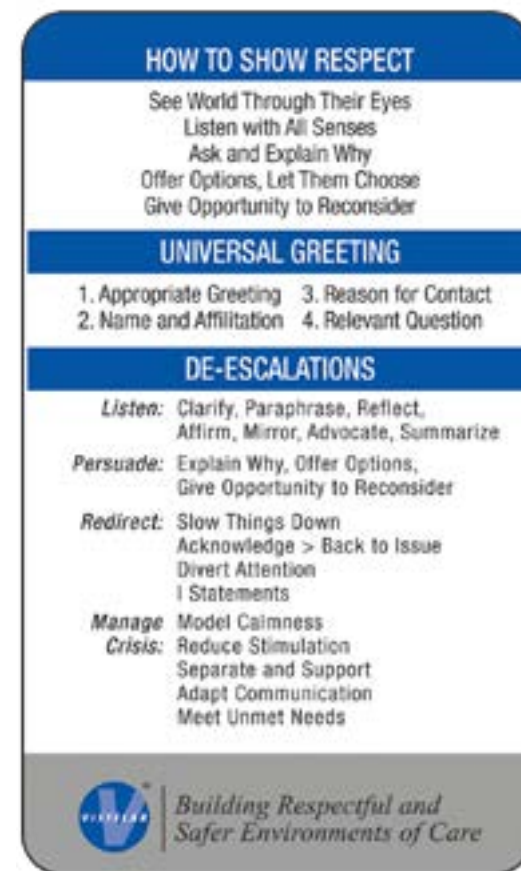
We hope you found great value in using this handbook. We have a lot more to share about how to build safe and respectful workplaces. For example, we offer training on how to:

- provide better customer service
- predict, prevent, and mitigate conflict
- avert verbal and physical attacks
- de-escalate resistance, anger, and abuse
- control crisis and aggression
- manage physical violence

Our conflict management expertise is available via published books, e-learning courses, manuals, virtual and onsite workshops, train-the-trainer programs, workplace violence consulting, and content licensing programs.

If you would like more information about our Unified Conflict Management System, please call us at: 877-690-8230 email us at: info@vistelar.com or visit us at: www.vistelar.com.

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